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TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 1902.

GLASS FOR WINDOWS

THE METHOD AND THE MATERIALS OF ITS MANUFACTURE.

Enough Arsenic in the Windows of an Ordinary House to Kill a Regiment of Men—Process of the Tankhouse and the Potthouse.

People who have glass windows in their homes do not know that the glass contains enough arsenic to make it a deadly poison. Glassmakers say that the windows of an ordinary home contain enough of this poison to kill a regiment of men. The popular supposition that glass is made of sand is a correct one, but a quantity of other articles enters into its composition.

Window glass factories are divided into two departments, a tankhouse and a potthouse. The process of glassmaking in one of these departments is practically the same as in the other. In the tankhouse the glass is all melted in immense tanks which will hold thousands of tons. In the potthouse the glass is made in pots.

After the area is lighted and a tank is heated the glass mixture is shoveled in. It includes glass left over from the former season, glass refuse, sand and salt cake. Arsenic is not used in the tankhouse for the reason that the heat is so intense that the drug is volatilized and escapes into the air without entering the mixture. As one mixture melts and flows to one end of a tank fresh supplies are shoveled in at the other end.

The molten mass settles and "works" in a manner similar to that of a mash in a distillery. From the salt cake comes a salt water that has to be separated from the mass, and the easiest way to remove it is to burn it out. This is done by throwing stove wood into the tank on top of the molten glass. The water is converted into steam, which is destroyed by the intense heat from the glass. The melted glass is then skimmed by an automatic skimmer, and it is ready for the gatherer.

A gatherer thrusts a long steel blowpipe into one of the rings at the lower end of the tank. He twists and turns it until a small ball of glass gathers on the end. This ball is partially cooled, polished by being turned in a box of sawdust and then passed on to the blower, who heats it again until it becomes like taffy. The blower swings the ball over a pit that is twelve feet deep and rapidly blows it into an elongated pear shape. When a blower is through, the melted glass becomes a perfect cylinder about 5 feet long and 2 feet across. It then passes to a "snapper," who takes it to a rack and breaks the roller loose from the blowpipe.

The snapper gathers a small lump of melted glass on the end of a rod and dexterously runs a narrow ribbon of the stuff around the ends of the roller, both at the blowpipe end and the closed end. The little ribbons of melted glass cool in a few seconds, when they are removed, leaving a narrow zone of almost red-hot glass around the rollers at each end. Then, taking a tool that resembles a soldering iron, the snapper rubs it for a moment on his forehead, and when the point of it is moistened with perspiration he runs the iron around the rollers at the heated spot. The glass cracks and separates as cleanly as if cut with a diamond, the blowpipe is removed, and the closed cylinder has become a roller and is then ready to go to the flattener.

The flattener works in another part of the building, where are located the flattening ovens. These ovens are heated to a temperature sufficient to soften the glass so that it may be rolled out into sheets. A series of freely tables placed in a circle like the spokes of a wheel revolve in the ovens, and on these tables the rollers are flattened. They are placed inside, allowed to become hot, and then a cold iron is run along the inside from end to end. The contact of the iron cuts the glass, which is then straightened out upon the table.

The flattener has a number of billets of green wood attached to long iron handles, and with these billets, which are shaped in such a manner as to do the work expected of them, he "irons" the softened sheet of glass until it is perfectly flat and smooth. The tables inside the oven revolve, the flattened sheet is carried away, and another roller is brought into position before the flattener. As the flattened sheets cool they are lifted to a place on a long traveling rack, on which they are by stages removed from the ovens, being allowed to cool as they go. This is done in order that the glass may not be shattered by too quick an exposure to the air.

When the sheets are taken from the flattening ovens, they are covered with a greasy, dirty looking coat of chemicals—soda, potash, silicates of the different salts, etc.—which must be removed, and for this purpose the rough sheets are placed in an acid bath composed of hydrochloric and sulphuric acids more or less diluted. After their immersion in this bath the sheets are taken to the cutting room, where workmen cut them into sizes and make them ready for the packers. Hardly a scrap of the glass except the rough edges is wasted. In fact, none is wasted, as all refuse goes back to be melted. After the cutters have finished their work the glass is packed in boxes and is then ready for the market—Indianapolis News.

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